GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:860
ANSWERED ON:06.03.2007
TEA GARDENS
Reddy Shri Mekapati Rajamohan

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of tea gardens lying closed in tea producing States as on date;

(b) whether any study has been conducted to know the reasons for their closure;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the remedial measures taken for their revival?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) : As per the information available, 39 tea gardens are lying closed of which 2 are located in Assam, 20 in Kerala and 17 in West Bengal.

(b) & (c) : The Government of India had appointed three Expert Committees to make in-depth study of the closed tea gardens. The main causes for sickness/closure as identified by the Committees include inherent weaknesses of the gardens due to poor yields arising out of poor condition of the gardens and factories (affecting tea quality and price realisations), poor garden management, frequent changes of garden managers and the management's excessive reliance on bank debt with negligible fresh equity infusion. In some of the gardens, the neglect was due to ownership disputes, protracted litigation and diversion of funds from tea gardens to other activities and in many cases strained relationship between management and garden workers.

(d) : The Government of India and the Tea Board have been facilitating discussions between the managements of the closed tea gardens and their bankers with a view to arrive at a settlement for re-opening of the closed tea gardens in various States of the country. A rehabilitation package for closed and sick tea gardens is also being formulated by the Government.